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STAFF NOTES:

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MIDDLE EAST — AFRICA — SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Sudan

Numayri Moves to Strengthen His Position

In the wake of the abortive coup of September 5, President Numayri has moved to quash what political opposition remains and further strengthen his own position.

The People's Assembly, Sudan's legislature, met this week and passed a number of constitutional amendments that in effect give Numayri unlimited power while diminishing individual rights. The changes have been made retroactive to May 1973, giving the Sudanese leader the legal instruments to deal with the coup plotters.

Two articles of the Sudanese constitution that give Numayri the responsibility for protecting the constitution have been amended to authorize him to take any action required to carry out this responsibility. The article dealing with freedom of movement and residence has been replaced by one that allows preventive detention and house arrest on general grounds without time limitations. Provisions of this article guaranteeing the right to a speedy trial have been suspended. An article dealing with the organization of the judiciary has been changed to provide for the creation of state security courts to try cases of high treason.

Other parts of the government have joined in the campaign to crush political opposition. The cabinet and executive bodies of the Sudanese Socialist Union--the country's sole political party--have met and recommended a purge of the civil service and the student body of Khartoum University to rid them of "anti-revolutionary elements."

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Meanwhile, Numayri is continuing his efforts to broaden his support within the military. He has reappointed Abu al-Gassim Hashim, a retired army officer, to the politburo of the Sudanese Socialist Union. Hashim, who is reportedly pro-Egyptian, was the last surviving military member of the now defunct Revolutionary Command Council who had not returned to a senior position in the government.
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OAPEC

A Status Report

The Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) is playing an increasingly active role in inter-Arab economic affairs, and is taking on some political functions by trying to sell the Arab case on oil to other governments and international organizations, according to a recent assessment by the US embassy in Kuwait, where OAPEC has its headquarters. OAPEC has turned aside efforts to get the organization directly involved in pricing and production questions, arguing that such activities fall properly to OPEC.

The embassy attributes part of OAPEC's vitality to the leadership of Ali Ateeqa, the pragmatic, highly qualified Libyan technocrat who is now serving as secretary general. Under Ateeqa, the headquarters staff has grown both in quality and quantity; it now has more than 70 employees. George Tomeh, former Syrian ambassador to the UN, has been made adviser for information and international affairs--areas to which OAPEC is giving greater attention. In April 1974, Michael Rice and Co., a public relations firm with large billings in the Middle East was hired as OPEC's publicity agent.

OAPEC contacts and coordination with consumer governments and international organizations, such as the EC, have been stepped up under Ateeqa. OAPEC officials have participated in meetings in the UK and Italy, and will be involved in seminars in France and Japan. The OAPEC-French meeting is reportedly scheduled for November and will be devoted to exploring "opportunities for cooperation with the Arab world." Both French government officials and businessmen will take part.

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The key inter-Arab economic projects sponsored by OAPEC include:

- the Arab Maritime Petroleum Transport Co., a tanker subsidiary;
- the Arab Ship Repair Yard; a drydock project in Bahrain;
- the Arab Petroleum Investment Co., a company formed in 1974 with capital in excess of \$1 billion for the support of petrochemical and related industries;
- the Arab Petroleum Services Co., an agency through which specialized companies will be created to engage in drilling, exploration, and other oil-related enterprises. The agreement was initialed in May 1975.

OAPEC members also contributed \$80 million in 1974 and 1975 to a fund to assist Arab oil-importing countries in meeting their balance-of-payments problems and for development purposes. The aid is administered through the Kuwait-based Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

Secretary General Ateeqa has also been pushing OAPEC to take the lead in looking into alternative sources of energy and alternative uses for oil.

OAPEC could eventually play a key role in regional economic integration. Economic nationalism, however, probably precludes significant progress in this direction in the near future.

At present, OAPEC has 10 members: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Algeria, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Qatar, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. Dubai withdrew from the organization when Bahrain was chosen as the site of the drydock project.

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OAPEC was established in early 1968 by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and pre-Qadhafi Libya. The three founding members, then seeking to maximize oil revenues, were attempting to dissociate themselves from a short-lived selective oil embargo associated with the 1967 Middle Eastern war that had been pushed through by radical Arab governments. The founding members were seeking a means by which to coordinate oil policy outside the venue of the Arab League, where they felt radical influence was too great. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

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Bangladesh

Military Changes Planned

President Mushtaque reportedly plans to make some changes in the military and intelligence services that reflect his concern over internal security and suspicion of Indian and Soviet intentions in Bangladesh.

[REDACTED]

Mushtaque, realizing Bangladesh's relative military weakness, is formulating plans to increase the 47,000-man army to 80,000, hopefully by the end of the year. (The US intelligence community has been estimating the size of the Bengalee army to be 28,000.) He also is reportedly seeking military equipment from Pakistan. The increase in personnel will be realized in part by the absorption into the army of the Rakkhi Bahini, a 15,000-man paramilitary group. The Rakkhi Bahini was set up by former president Mujib and was believed to be loyal to him. Mushtaque presumably believes that its members will be more easily controlled in the army.

[REDACTED] Mushtaque is worried about the limited ability of his intelligence services to provide information on India and the USSR--particularly on possible Soviet or Indian subversive activities within Bangladesh.

[REDACTED]

Mushtaque has been suspicious of India and the Soviet Union particularly since his assumption of power following the coup d'etat in mid-August. [REDACTED] Mushtaque even contemplates eventual defense agreements with Pakistan and perhaps China to protect his country from Indian or Soviet encroachments.

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Mushtaque's concern over Soviet and Indian aims is probably real, but the possibility of defense pacts with Islamabad or Peking seems remote. Mushtaque realizes he must not antagonize India lest he tempt New Delhi to intervene militarily in Bangladesh. The Indians are already concerned about Mushtaque's government which it sees as a departure from Mujib's secular, pro-Indian regime. Although Mushtaque has stepped back a bit from the old regime's close ties to the Soviets, he also seems inclined to avoid upsetting Moscow, which he continues to depend on for military aircraft.
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